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Suggested Use: Background Information.

A wartime version of the old saw "you can't eat your cake and have it, too" might well be "you can't eat cake and have meat, too." But what has eating cake to do with how much meat we have? Simply this:

Cake is made from sugar -- usually considered an essential ingredient, at least. Sugar is made from molasses. Molasses can also be made into industrial alcohol for the production of synthetic rubber and other products vitally needed in the war effort. Because of this, the demand is almost 50 percent above that of 1943 and 180 percent greater than in 1942. To meet this demand the equivalent in invert molasses of approximately a million tons of sugar is needed.

A million tons is a lot of sugar. The total allocation of sugar for all civilian uses in 1944 is only a little more than 5 million tons. Another million tons would provide about the same amount of sugar civilians had before the war. That extra million tons would make a lot of cake or sweeten a lot of coffee.

But--and here's the rub--if the invert molasses required to make that extra million tons of sugar were diverted from the production of industrial alcohol, it would require the use of grain--in terms of corn it would take 66 million bushels. In 1943, grains furnished the bulk of the raw material needed to make industrial alcohol. However, the expanded alcohol program, coupled with the need to conserve grains for food and feed, has made it necessary to use invert, of high-test, molasses from which no sugar has been extracted and which, therefore, yields much more alcohol than does blackstrap molasses, a by-product of sugar making. The supply of blackstrap molasses is limited and yields only a relatively small portion of the supply needed.

But suppose the corn were used instead of the molasses. The 66 million bushels of corn which would be required to produce as much industrial alcohol as the molasses equivalent of a million tons of sugar would mean a lot less meat and milk.

Take beef, for instance. It takes roughly 14 bushels of corn for a hundred pounds of grain in feeding beef cattle. A live steer dressing out about 60 percent would mean that it would take in round numbers 10 bushels of corn to produce 43 pounds of beef (dressed weight). At this rate the 66 million bushels of corn would mean nearly 300 million pounds of beef.

Sixty-six million bushels of corn will keep industrial plants producing materials vital to the manufacture of airplanes, explosives, penicillin, sulfa drugs, surgical dressings and adhesives operating for around six months. So little corn has been marketed through regular channels the past few weeks, the plants making war-needed products have had difficulty in getting enough to continue operations. To overcome this difficulty the government has inaugurated an intensive purchase campaign in certain corn areas to get needed supplies. If another 66 million bushels had to be supplied for the production of industrial alcohol, the situation would be even worse.

Thus, more sugar on your table would mean less meat and milk and less corn for vital war materials.